

1 INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2015-165

2
3 REQUESTING THAT THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE,
4 AND LABOR STUDY THE NEED FOR CHANGES TO THE COMMUNITY MATCH RURAL
5 PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT PROGRAM.
6

7 WHEREAS, the Community Match Rural Physician Recruitment Program was
8 created in 1995 to increase the number of physicians practicing medicine in
9 rural communities in Arkansas by allowing physicians to receive funds for
10 practicing full-time primary care medicine in a rural community in Arkansas;
11 and
12

13 WHEREAS, under § 6-81-701, a "qualified rural community" means an area
14 reasonably determined by the Arkansas Rural Medical Practice Student Loan and
15 Scholarship Board to be medically underserved; and
16

17 WHEREAS, under § 6-81-701, "medically underserved" means an area that
18 has unmet needs for medical services due to factors including without
19 limitation the ratio of primary care physicians to population, the infant
20 mortality rate, the percentage of population with incomes below the federal
21 poverty level as it existed on January 1, 2007, the percentage of resident
22 individuals sixty (60) years of age and older, the percentage of physicians
23 sixty (60) years of age and older, accessibility within the area to primary
24 care medicine, and other relevant criteria the Arkansas Rural Medical
25 Practice Student Loan and Scholarship Board deems necessary for a
26 determination of unmet needs for medical services; and
27

28 WHEREAS, under § 6-81-701, "primary care medicine" means health care
29 provided in one (1) of the following areas of practices: family medicine,
30 general internal medicine, general internal medicine and pediatrics, general
31 pediatrics, general obstetrics and gynecology, general surgery, emergency
32 medicine, and geriatrics; and
33

34 WHEREAS, the Community Match Rural Physician Recruitment Program
35 obligates a physician to practice full-time primary care medicine in a
36 qualified rural community for four (4) years; and

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35

WHEREAS, eligibility for the Community Match Rural Physician Recruitment Program is dependent on the physician being a graduate of the College of Medicine of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences or any accredited medical school in the United States; and

WHEREAS, a physician can apply to the Arkansas State Medical Board for a license to practice medicine if the individual is a graduate of: a recognized United States or Canadian medical school whose entrance requirements and course of instruction have been approved by the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association; a Canadian eclectic medical school which has been approved by the Council on Medical Education of the National Eclectic Medical Association; or a foreign medical school whose entrance requirements and course of instruction have been approved by the Arkansas State Medical Board; and

WHEREAS, the eligibility requirements for the Community Match Rural Physician Recruitment Program limit the pool of possible participating physicians while the Arkansas State Medical Board allows additional physicians to practice in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, the majority of the Arkansas is medically underserved pursuant to the standards of the Department of Health; and

WHEREAS, additional physicians that could be recruited under the Community Match Rural Physician Recruitment Program if the eligibility requirements were broadened could help reduce the medically underserved areas across the state; and

WHEREAS, for the health of its citizens, the General Assembly should pursue efforts to improve and increase access to health care by utilizing the Community Match Rural Physician Recruitment Program and similar programs to their full capabilities,

NOW THEREFORE,

1 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR OF
2 THE NINETIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

3
4 THAT the House Committee On Public Health, Welfare, And Labor study the
5 needs for changes to the Community Match Rural Physician Recruitment Program
6 to improve and increase access to health care in medically underserved areas.
7

8 Respectfully submitted,

9
10
11
12 Representative Mary Bentley
13 District 73

14
15
16 By: JMB/JMB
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36